Video series presents three sides of 'real' Nixon

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Culled from nearly 40 hours of frank discussions, "The Real Richard Nixon" is a three-volume set just released by Central Park Media.

Historian and former White House Fellow Frank Gannon, who spent three years as a writer at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., sat down with Nixon in 1983 for about 40 hours of discussion with the controversial former U.S. president.

Interviewed in a spontaneous and unrehearsed setting, Nixon bares his soul about his family and what his historical mark on American politics may someday be.

Gannon, who went to Nixon's home in San Clemente, Calif., to organize and research the writing of the retired president's memoirs, talks with a relaxed Nixon in this living autobiographical history, released to coincide with Oliver Stone's film, "Nixon," as well as with several current television specials.

Central Park Media's managing director, John O'Donnell, called the collection "by far the most comprehensive, revealing video history on the life of Richard Nixon, because it is openly told by Nixon himself. His supporters and detractors together will appreciate the sheer human drama reflected in this program, as Nixon reveals himself to be a terrific storyteller and a great conversationalist with a sense of humor."

The three cassettes are subtitled "Early Life," "Pat" and "Twenty-Eight Days." The set lists for $49.95, and individual reels are $19.95 each. The set can be ordered at (800) 453-4000.

The first cassette, "Early Years" (66 minutes), explores how Nixon grew up a Quaker, became a naval officer and got elected to Congress at the age of 32.

"Pat" (50 minutes) tells of his feelings for his wife and her role in his personal and political life. "Twenty-Eight Days" (85 minutes) presents his account of the physical, mental and emotional pressures of his final 28 days in the White House.